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L. J. Kimball: Fred, could you tell me where you were born?

Maj. Fagan: I was born in Quantico, VA, 28 September 1967.

L. J. Kimball: And your father, was he a Marine?

Maj. Fagan: Yes Sir, he was Fred Fagan also, retired as a colonel in 1990.

L. J. Kimball: What was he doing in Quantico when you were born there?

Maj. Fagan: He was a staff platoon commander at the Basic School and I think he was teaching lieutenants how to patrol when I was actually hatched, so they had to call him out of the field.

L. J. Kimball: What was your birth date again?

Maj. Fagan: 28 September 1967.

L. J. Kimball: I only missed you by, left Quantico in 1966. It wasn't too long before then, 1967 I was over in Vietnam. What was your family life like? What do you recollect from being a Marine Corps dependent growing up?

Maj. Fagan: One of the biggest things I remember that happened throughout my life was moving a lot and the transitions. We had a lot of, had to meet new friends everywhere we went. That was kind of different, looking back on it. I know an awful lot of people. I don't have many close, close friends. So, what it meant was that in September I'd go to a new school and have new classmates and it was kind of scary.

L. J. Kimball: A lot of dependents didn't thrive in an environment like that, but on the other hand there were people, as you said you didn't make any long-lasting friends, but you had an opportunity to make lots of friends and travel around quite a bit. Had a lot of experiences that a lot of other people didn't. How, looking back on it, how was your experience as a dependent, how do you feel about that?

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Maj. Fagan: I feel good about it. I don't regret any of it. As you said, I was able to see a lot of neat things across our country, mostly in the South East and on the East Coast, but for example; my wife and I just came off of leave and we drove from Birmingham down to New Orleans. We stopped in Montgomery just to see the place where I used to live, my old high school. That was a lot of fun. Had I had more time I would have called a very, very good friend I have down there. He works for the Chamber of Commerce. It's things like that that make it interesting, and looking back, I don't wish I could change anything. That was good growing up.

L. J. Kimball: Let's go through the chronology here as your father progresses through his career and you go to these various duty stations.

Maj. Fagan: I can start with my birth. I can start with his commissioning.

L. J. Kimball: Sure. I'm sure you were able to hear lots of sea stories over the years.

Maj. Fagan: He graduated from the Naval Academy in 1964. He came from Hattiesburg, Mississippi, where he and Mom grew up.

L. J. Kimball: I was trying to figure out where I'd heard that name, because I graduated in 1965.

Maj. Fagan: He was with 9th company. He stayed at the Academy for a while teaching drill.

L. J. Kimball: Battalion Drill Officer? That's what I did too.

Maj. Fagan: Yes, I think so. Basic School obviously and then Vietnam. Then Mom went to live with her folks in Hattiesburg, Mississippi, and they came back 13 months later and went to the Basic School as an instructor. He taught there, I was born, and every time we pass by Quantico, we pull in, down that road, the back gate to Camp Barrett there, Garrisonville, and show me where they used to live and where they lived and where I was born. Dad then went to back to Vietnam as a company commander.

L. J. Kimball: Alright, I'm going to interrupt you here from time to time. Do you recall on his first tour who he was with in Vietnam?

Maj. Fagan: He was with the 7th Marines, I want to say 1/7 [First Battalion, Seventh Marines], maybe as a lieutenant.

L. J. Kimball: As a platoon commander?

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Maj. Fagan: Yes, a platoon commander, right. He was in the 3 shop at the regiment for a little while I think when he first got there and then went down to get a platoon. Left as a platoon commander I think.

L. J. Kimball: Second Tour. What year?

Maj. Fagan: Second Tour? I would say 1968, 1969. Of course I Corps same area, but he was a company commander of Kilo 3/7. I would need to do some research on that to make sure for your purposes, but came back and went to AWS [Amphibious Warfare School]. Mom and I went to Hattiesburg at that time he was in Vietnam. He later contracted malaria. Fourteen months later he came back and went to AWS at Quantico and. . .

L. J. Kimball: What year was that?

Maj. Fagan: That was, should have been 1969. The school year, 1969, 1970, should have been.

L. J. Kimball: Strange as it seems I went to AWS before your father did.

Maj. Fagan: Well, that was a 6 months class back then. We then moved to Parris Island. He took over, he was a company commander in the 3rd Battalion, and that's when my sister was born and we moved on base. I remember that pretty vividly and stayed there until 1973. He eventually became the director of DI School at Parris Island. Then he was a captain by the time he was a company commander in Vietnam, and at Parris Island, he was promoted to Major and went to headquarters. Dad was assigned to Officer's Assignment Branch and was the Warrant Officer's Monitor for awhile. Three years after that went to. . .

L. J. Kimball: What three years?

Maj. Fagan: This was 1973 to 1976. 1976 to 1978 we were here at Camp Lejeune. Dad started out as a major in the Division G3. He was a training officer. At that old building by the water [Bldg. 2], yes Sir. It's pretty characteristic, that building inside looks a lot like an old Camp Lejeune relic.

L. J. Kimball: It looks like something built in 1942.

Maj. Fagan: Yes your exactly right. He then became the XO [Executive Officer] of 3/6. They became a BLT [Battalion Landing Team] and he floated with the MAU [Marine Amphibious Unit] to the Med in 1977, 1978 time frame. Anyway floated and

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came back 6 months later. We left Camp Lejeune to go to Newport, RI when he was at the Junior Course there.

L. J. Kimball: O.K. The time your father was in 3/6? Where did you live?

Maj. Fagan: We lived at MOQ [Married Officer's Quarters] 2517, on St. Mary's Drive by the fire station.

L. J. Kimball: I lived on St. Mary's Drive, another coincidence.

Maj. Fagan: Is that right, Sir? I have vivid memories, that whole experience, that was just, you know, I was in 4th and 5th grades then. A great place to be in 4th and 5th grades, 9 or 10 year old kid, whatever it was.

L. J. Kimball: What do you remember as being particularly enjoyable of the experience?

Maj. Fagan: Just the number of friends I had who—we were all Marine brats—were moving. Every one of had to have pretty thick skin. You couldn't . . . had to get to know each other some way, pretty quickly or else we were going to move away. . . riding bikes and playing on the golf course just in our back yard. We had swings every where. We built dams on creeks and we did run around the wood out there. Went fishing and crabbing a lot in the summer time. That was just a great experience. We had New River, we had the golf course, we had everything. We had woods. You could run your bike anywhere you wanted to. There wasn't any risk of a lot of the things that happen today. It was just a lot of fun.

L. J. Kimball: They let you make mistakes sometimes back in those days.

Maj. Fagan: That's what I hear.

L. J. Kimball: What school do you go to?

Maj. Fagan: I went to 4th grade at Stone Street, and then 5th grade, they moved us out to Tarawa Terrace, I think TT2 out there.

L. J. Kimball: 5th grade?

Maj. Fagan: Elementary School, yes Sir. I was kind of surprised. I remember in particular we woke up one day and basically, they had changed the system. I guess 1st through 6th grade were at Stone Street and all of a sudden in the middle of the night they changed it and they moved the 5th and 6th graders, all of them down to TT.

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L. J. Kimball: What did you think about that school?

Maj. Fagan: It was nothing, nothing unusual, out of the ordinary, I mean it was in a different neighborhood. I didn't know the neighborhood. We took a bus all the way out there. They even took some of the teachers from Stone Street and put them out there at TT. Moved from Camp Lejeune in 1978 to Newport, RI. Dad was in the Junior Course out there, Command Staff, and then from there, Dad was the G3 [the S-3 or G-3 is the Unit Operations Officer] for, I think 4th MAB [Marine Amphibious Brigade]. I think that was 1979 to about 1981 or so. We were living in Virginia Beach. That was between Little Creek and the Mount Whitney [this is a ship, the U.S.S. Mount Whitney. . .] was over there at the, NOB [Navy Operating Base], Norfolk.

L. J. Kimball: Obviously my comments on the 4th MAB applied to the time I was there. II MAF and 4th MAB. They squared away those organizations. II MAF is now pretty good. They did away with the 4th MAB. But there were times when that place was pitiful. That is, the command elements.

Maj. Fagan: They're about to bring it back. General Jones [current CMC] said he's going to bring back the MEB [Marine Expeditionary Brigade; successor to the MAB] staff and make it a standing unit. But, General Cheetham was in charge then. I remember him vividly, went to Norway and Northern Wedding/Bold Guard. I remember he conducted all these exercises in Europe. He was pretty busy traveling to these places to train. We left Norfolk and Dad went to Camp Lejeune, came here. Dad was the XO of 2nd Marines working for, we lived down there at 2219 down there on St. Mary's Drive.

L. J. Kimball: St. Mary's Drive again.

Maj. Fagan: That's right I keep going back. Dad worked as XO at 2nd Marine Regiment. He worked for Colonel Mundy. Then took over 2/2 as CO and did a UDP [Unit Deployment Program] to Okinawa. I think he finished out that time, perhaps with 6th MAB, I want to say, with General Milligan, I think. It's kind of foggy. Dad was selected for TLS [Top Level School] and went to Montgomery, Alabama.

L. J. Kimball: O.K. What year are we in?

Maj. Fagan: We are in 1983. I finished 10th grade. At Lejeune High School. I started in 1981 and ended in 1983. So, summer of 1983 we left here. I spent 11th grade in Montgomery, Alabama while Dad went to his school.

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L. J. Kimball: At the Air Force War College?

Maj. Fagan: Right. Air War College at Maxwell. He was done with that in 1984. He was the Deputy Director of the 6th Marine Corps District in Atlanta, Georgia, at that time in 1984 to 1986. He was the director from 1986 to 1987 and then he transferred to the Naval Academy and became the Senior Marine Representative up there. Department Head of English, History and Government and then Dad retired and that was 1987 to 1990. They were there in the last two years that I was there my four years. Interesting.

L. J. Kimball: I imagine it was. So you knew just about all you needed to know about becoming a midshipman at that point.

Maj. Fagan: That's right. I earned my own spurs at that point and didn't need Dad to make things happen for me. That's not my way—it's not the right way. As much as they tried to keep their hands off, and they did a great job of doing it, they let me do my own thing. It was still tough. Everybody knew who I was, there was a little bit of pressure there, but I think that Dad and I were a pretty good team, actually. I would tell him about things going on in the Yard, that would interest him and help him. I think it made for some pretty good successes. The quality of the Marines coming out of the Naval Academy definitely improved. I can tell you right now, there was high quality, because we went to OCS [Officer Candidate School]. Classes of 1989, 1990, 1991. All three went to OCS with the ROTC [Reserve Officer Training Corps] program, 6-week Bull Dog Program in the middle of the summer and Dad was instrumental in getting us started. We were all for it, every one of us. We were a little leery of it before we went, but then we fully supported the decision on that . . .

L. J. Kimball: Was this after commissioning that you did this?

Maj. Fagan: No Sir, this was right before. Right before our 1st Class year.

L. J. Kimball: 1st Class summer?

Maj. Fagan: Yes, Sir, 1st class summer and we went from Bull Dog, well some guys did Plebe Detail. Some guys maybe had to do summer school, but the preponderance of us went out to Camp Pendleton. To El Torro and Camp Pendleton and Hawaii to spend time with the Fleet Marines. Not only was it an eye-opening experience, but it was real training that we had not had until that point. We had real, Marine Corps style training at OCS. We understood what TLO's [Tactical Leadership Officer] were, what War Gear was and who and what an NCO [Non-

Commissioned Officer] does. We had one, kick us in the butt all the time, all day long. But, that was a really rewarding experience. Not only OCS, but also going up to Camp Pendleton spending time with ah. . .

L. J. Kimball: During the 4 years that you were at the Naval Academy, were there any unusual or interesting experiences, or characters that you met during that 4 year time?

Maj. Fagan: Certainly the professors, some were colorful and peculiar in their own right. Some were, they really pushed us hard. I'm trying to get specific. Dr. Bob DeMoyer, was my advisor in Systems Engineering and then I figure retired now. Major Greg Morrison, who was an artillery officer who taught Systems Engineering. He had a big impact on me. There was a Christian Missionary, a Christian Group called the Navigators that had a couple of directors there, a couple of the leaders who were civilians, had a big impact on me. And that has lasted my life and it will continue. Their influence will continue until the day I die.

L. J. Kimball: So, then you were commissioned in 1984?

Maj. Fagan: 1989.

L. J. Kimball: Not until 1989. Of course they keep changing the cycle on everyone, depending on the needs of the Marine Corp. But, I think our recruitment goal, when I was a midshipman, was considerably less than when you were there, and we never had any trouble. In fact there was always a bunch of people who were never able to become Marines because their class standing wasn't high enough. I guess they break the class into quarters now, something like that?

Maj. Fagan: They didn't for me, as far as the ranking in order or merit. I don't remember them doing that. It was the top one fourth to the middle one fourth and then the bottom one.

L. J. Kimball: Yes, because what they were finding. When I was stationed at academy, the Marine Corps was still a very popular option, instead of everybody going in the Marine Corps out of the first quarter, just as an example, the quota was broken down. You could only take so much for the Marine Corps from the first quarter and so many from the second quarter, so many from the third and so many from the fourth to make sure that all the cream of the Academy didn't go Naval Air or Marine Corps or something like that. You could stand very high in your class and end up in the Supply Corps.

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Maj. Fagan: It sounds like kind of a quality spread, I guess. Sounds like the Basic School, but not at the Naval Academy. It didn't have any.

L. J. Kimball: It is interesting just, as an aside, to show how things have changed. If you look as recent as say 1967 or 1968, they did not fill the infantry quota out of Basic School because no one wanted to go into the infantry. When I graduated from the Basic School in 1966, they only allowed the top 10% of the graduates to go into the infantry. There were only 4 people from my platoon who were permitted to go into the infantry. Everyone else had to settle for being an artillery officer, tanker, or engineer, for example, and of course the bottom people ended up in the supply. But it changed just in a brief period of two years, at the Naval Academy also. There was more difference say between the class of 1965 and 1968 than there was between the class of 1965 and the class of 1900. When you got to Basic School, in my day, everybody wanted to be an infantry officer. But they only let the people who stood highest in their Basic School class into the infantry, which was an interesting mind-set to develop at that point. Because you were allowed to become an infantry officer, you were considered yourself the best. Everybody else was secondary to the infantry because it meant they didn't stand as high in their class. By 1968 that completely changed. Nobody wanted to be in the infantry, they couldn't make their quotas. They had to start directing people into the infantry.

Maj. Fagan: Interesting.

L. J. Kimball: O.K. You graduate from the Naval Academy. Now, you're commissioned as a 2nd Lieutenant. Other than the obvious reasons, why the Marine Corps?

Maj. Fagan: Well, Sir, I mean, it is a Corps. A brotherhood. Is, they're serious about their profession. It's all about war fighting, they're warriors. They are physical, they rely on each other, they fight for each other and there's no question about where your loyalties lay. I'm speaking of after 10 years of being one, but at the time I didn't see all that. I saw a little of it. The Marines who were there did a good job of showing us teamwork, camaraderie, and gung-ho spirit. Especially after going down to OCS and experiencing that. Teamwork, the camaraderie, their esprit, the dedication. Young Marines today can do so much with so little. They do so much and ask for so little. It's just an amazing concept and an amazing mind-set, mentality, lifestyle. It's special.

L. J. Kimball: Pretty common motivation. Even in these times, values seem to have deteriorated while the Marine Corps pretty much has been able to hold it's own.

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Maj. Fagan: Yes, Sir. The leadership, the emphasis that Marines at the Naval Academy put on leadership impacted a lot of us—Marines and Squids. The people factor and the man power and working through men's problems and motivating them. One of the instructors at the Academy, I'm trying to remember his name, but was just a fire breather, just would excite you, ignite your enthusiasm. He was so excited to be a Marine. That was contagious. He was interested in every single one of us.

L. J. Kimball: That's great. These things go through cycles. Being assigned at the Naval Academy by the Navy, was not career enhancing. The Marine Corps has always been fairly selective about who they send there to set the example and once again, to make their quota of Naval Academy Midshipmen in the Marine Corps. At that time, I was there when the first women came in. To me, the biggest difference in the Naval Academy then, since when I attended, was not the presence of women, it was the extremely poor quality of Navy Officers who were there. If you couldn't make it anywhere else, you couldn't handle it in the fleet, they sent you to the Naval Academy. People were fat, their tummies were rolling over their belt, their trousers came over their ankles, their uniforms were dirty and grubby and their flies were open. I just shook my head. We didn't have any trouble of making our quota for the Marines, the three years I was there, and I think one of the reasons was, in comparison to the Navy, anybody who was serious about the military would not want to be associated with the caliber that the Navy was providing.

Maj. Fagan: The alternative.

L. J. Kimball: So, but after that they got a little bit more serious.

Maj. Fagan: That's good. They also got serious with the Nuke power bonus. That was very enticing and drew a lot of my classmates. \$6,000 right now. Here you go. In January, 1989. Goodness you didn't even know what to do with \$6,000 back then. Buy a car, I guess, whatever, but.

L. J. Kimball: Well, again when I was a Midshipman at the Academy, Rickover was running rampant. If Rickover wanted you, it didn't matter whether you wanted to be a Marine or not. During my first couple of years there I was kind of confused and thought I wanted to be in Nuclear Power but the more I thought about it the more I realized, why do I want to spend 6 months under the ocean, getting fat and looking like a mushroom, pushing a slide rule and looking at trigonometry tables, we didn't have computers back then. It always seemed that real people didn't become Marines. There was always some exceptional individual that you heard about but never really knew, that actually got to be a United States Marine. And it

occurred to me then, I could be a Marine. So, instead of taking 27 credit hours, we had core courses then so if you wanted to take Inorganic Chemistry and all those high-powered courses you had to take them as overloads, and I was taking all these overloads. It was like walking by the Burning Bush and the ray of light striking and said, "You don't have to be a mushroom, you can run up and down hills with a bayonet in your teeth, be a leader of men and do all sorts of fun things." I said, "I'm going to be a Marine." I went to Fort Benning for parachute training and just had a hell of a time. I got to be a Marine. I never looked back. So, you're a Second Lieutenant. Did you go right from there to Basic School?

Maj. Fagan: No Sir, I had a quick detour. I stayed at the Naval Academy while I was an assistant company officer during plebe summer and just as the brigade came back, I soon after that left, checked into the Basic School and stayed there for about 9 or 10 months, went to the new infantry officer's course they had down there. After the basic course I checked out and checked in down here at the 2nd Marine Division, 1st Battalion 8th Marines.

L. J. Kimball: What year was this?

Maj. Fagan: It was 1990, July, 1990, right before Saddam Hussein invaded Kuwait. I checked into Alpha Company, took over 1st platoon, and we started training. Soon the balloon went up, and we were on again off again, getting ready for an LF6F [Landing Force 6th Fleet] deployment during the following year—1991. Rumors ran rampant at my level—going to SWA, going on a summer Med cruise, going to SWA, and on and on. Finally December 1990 we flew over to SWA [South West Asia] and met up with our amtracks there at Camp 15 in Al Jaber, kept moving steadily north getting ready for the ground offensive and went across the line and went through the breach. We were the first. My platoon was the first one through the breach. Umm Gudair was the area through which we attacked. Engineers had proofed, and we had line charges and tanks and lots of CAS.

L. J. Kimball: O.K. Let's go back a few months. When you become a real Marine, after you graduate from Basic School and all, how did your initial experiences compare with your perceptions of being a Marine?

Maj. Fagan: Let's see. I was surprised at the amount of time and attention I was having to give to some of my problem children. You know, bad checks, upset wives, and you know stolen cars, fights out in town. I was surprised also at some of my ner'do'wells who couldn't press out the utilities and couldn't keep their weapons clean, and, it wasn't a problem—just something that surprised me. I thought all Marines inherently through implicit motivation did all those things, by

themselves, on their own. My platoon sergeant, Gy. Sgt. Trawick, squared all these things away for me. I tried not to get into his business of troop-handling.

L. J. Kimball: O.K. The reality was, the Marines weren't exactly as you imagined they were going to be. You thought they'd all be as motivated as you were yourself.

Maj. Fagan: Yes, Sir.

L. J. Kimball: What did Camp Lejeune look like as a real Marine as compared to looking at it as a dependent? Did you have a different perception to what the camp was like?

Maj. Fagan: Well, my experience as a child, growing up here, actually gave me some familiarity with what was going on in the base. It did not differ really that much. Granted, I was seeing a different side of it. I was all over the training areas, running around with my Marines. As a kid, I was back here on Paradise Point mostly, driving to the PX and that kind of thing. But for the most part, not too much had, I mean the PX was still there, I knew where the theater was. I knew the layout of, I knew where the 10th Marines was. I knew where the 10th Marines pool was. I knew where all the gyms were. It wasn't like I had to learn the area to spend. . . it really helped. I was living at that time down at Topsail Island, living with another Marine. I was single.

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Maj. Fagan: He was a Lieutenant, we were classmates in college and I'd drive in, in the morning the back way so I got to know that was a good way to chill out you know. Pass all these trees and finally the big bridge, and that was a great, you know drive 55 miles an hour back home. That was good. That was a good way to kind of relax. But, the base, you know I'd been to Onslow Beach. Dad took me hunting. Dad would take me hunting and fishing, you know. We'd launch our boat out at Mile Hammock Bay, LZ Bluebird. In fact LZ Bluebird was the first place we went. We had a CAPEX there in the LZ Bluebird when I was a platoon commander. Must have been in a helicopter for about 45 minutes just cutting circles in the sky before they'd call us to land. I was just familiar. I was familiar with the EAF [Expeditionary Air Field] out there and. . .

L. J. Kimball: . . . at Mile Hammock Bay area and doing a CAPEX, and some activities at Bluebird as a platoon commander, that sort of thing. You had the advantage of having some familiarity with Camp Lejeune, being here as a dependent, so. . . what did you think of Jacksonville itself? Did you find a difference in impression from when you were a dependent to when you were an officer here?

Maj. Fagan: Yes, Sir, I remember when I was a kid, I came back from a school I went to in Laurinberg, North Carolina over the summer. I took a bus from Laurinberg to Jacksonville at Camp Lejeune. The last couple of, the last stop we made before getting to the base, was Court Street. We picked up, this was 1980 or 1979 or 1981 or something like that. I was scared to death. I mean this was a bunch of drunk Marines coming on the bus and they're hooting and hollering and their raising some Cain and they of course were going to pay for it the next morning, but they didn't care. So, that was a scary thing, I remember. I had no exposure to that whatsoever before that.

L. J. Kimball: Was Court Street at the height of its infamy in those days or had the city fathers cleaned it up by then?

Maj. Fagan: As far as I know it was at the height of it's decadence at that point, Sir, but I didn't know the details and that's all I knew. Of course now, Court Street, I go to church down on Court Street. It's pretty and well kept for the most part. There's some empty buildings down there and at that point when I was a lieutenant I believe they were trying and starting to clean the place up and it was getting. . . I don't ever remember going down there, but I remember they were trying to clean it up. There was still some misbehavior going on, but. . .

L. J. Kimball: How about the 2nd Front area, was that restricted? Well, restricted in the sense that it was mostly attended by Marines over at Camp Geiger or did some of the Marines from Camp Lejeune go down there also.

Maj. Fagan: I've heard that. I've heard that term. What are you referring to?

L. J. Kimball: There was that area of bars and tattoo parlors, one thing or the other. It was across the street from Camp Geiger.

Maj. Fagan: Well, I just remember it was an eyesore when I was a kid and then I remember as a lieutenant seeing Saigon Sam and more of the titty bars and that kind of thing that were all over the place over there. Had a Gunny one time tell me when he was over there, he was in 8th Marines, over at Camp Geiger, he was a lance coolie or something. He would have to go in groups of 15 or 20. He was a dark green Marine, great man. And when he was a young stud he would have to go in groups of 15 or 20 because they would jump you.

L. J. Kimball: Are you talking about the 2nd Front or Court Street?

Maj. Fagan: 2nd Front. Go out the gate and the Marines would mug you. I would think to myself, I can't believe that's true, that Marines would do this. He said, yes, Sir. I guess it was bad back then. I didn't know, that was when I was in the 4th or 5th grade, the Gunny was a PFC but, I guess it was pretty dangerous back then.

L. J. Kimball: It was. Fortunately that was the period of time Marine Corps history that you missed. A lot of good Marines just found that situation intolerable and decided to hang up their jock strap because the racial difficulty that existed in the Marine Corps at that time. It was pitiful. You wouldn't believe some of the stories I could tell you. The Marine Corps was bad enough, but the other services were incredible. They say that there was never a mutiny on board a US naval war ship. But at times when I was deployed to West Pac there were and over in the Mediterranean about the same time, there were what constituted almost mutinies by black Marines and black sailors, it was just a very uncomfortable situation. You could walk down the street as a young lieutenant or a captain and the black Marines wouldn't want to salute you. In fact if you wanted to take them to the task, which as a good officer you did, you're liable to get beaten up by a group of black Marines for your efforts. You can see it was very distressing. You know what your attitude and perception of the Marine Corps is. It's proud heritage and history. I was the same way. When I was Headquarters Commandant there at Camp Elmore, the world's smallest Marine Corps Base, there would be cases when you'd see enlisted Marines or sailors and they would see you coming down the street, they'd cross the street so they wouldn't have to salute. There was one day, and I was just fed up. I wasn't going to take this kind of nonsense, young idealistic captain or major whatever I was. It was obvious, this sailor crossed the street so he wouldn't have to salute me, so I crossed the street. When he saw me coming he bent down to tie his shoe so he wouldn't have to salute me. I stood there waiting for him. I made him salute me. That was typical of those days. When I was at that Northernmost Camp in Okinawa. . .

Maj. Fagan: Oh, Schwab.

L. J. Kimball: Schwab. There would be nights when I first joined the First Battalion 9th Marines before we deployed, where hundreds of black Marines would gather on the football fields and talk about overthrowing authority, their supposed mistreatment, etc. You had to get armed guards, black NCO's and Staff NCO's out there to break them up, disperse them. Looking back on it, it's inconceivable that things like that happened. But, it did. The other services were even worse. It was a very uncomfortable time. You're at Desert Storm. You're in combat for the very first time. What were your impressions?

Maj. Fagan: Well, we were just taking our jobs seriously, our mission, we had done this time and time again. I mean I remember digging ditches with e-tools [entrenching tools, or shovels] so we could train on trench clearing. In the months and weeks leading up to the ground offensive we were, all of us were a little bit apprehensive. We didn't know what was going to happen and what the reaction of the first guy we met was going to be, but it all worked out. They were more afraid than certainly we were of them.

L. J. Kimball: Did you feel like at the initiation of Desert Storm, when you finally got to combat, a certain amount of anxiety, or did you feel that you were prepared and you could handle any situations you ran into?

Maj. Fagan: Well. Sir, I did feel pretty prepared. I mean we were well trained and we had good leaders. I had good Marines under me. That was the strength of it right there. I remember my three squad leaders, my platoon sergeant and my guide. I relied heavily on all of those guys and the section leader of the amtracks that were attached to my platoon, those guys between keeping weapons clean, keeping hygiene up, you know good quality defensive positions or making sure that gear and men were accounted for. They were just on top of everything. Naturally, I'd receive my stick-and-rudder from my CO, and Gy. Sgt. Trawick would make it happen in the most efficient way. We had a great team.

L. J. Kimball: You started to say something earlier about a battalion commander, a Lieutenant Colonel Harrington. Was this an experience in your career or your fathers?

Maj. Fagan: My Dad's career, I think that, I just can't remember if Dad either turned over 2/2 to him, or received it from him, or maybe he was the battalion commander that Dad went with to the Med in 3/6. I'm just telling you that, I can't remember.

L. J. Kimball: Alright, you're at Desert Storm and what, was it 100, 100 hours. Where were you at the cease fire?

Maj. Fagan: We were South West of Kuwait City near one of the ring roads, one of the beltways that surround the city in a blocking position with Company B, 4th tanks. That's where my company was, and it was in an agricultural area, farming area actually, very green, very lush, very surprising. I was very surprised at that area. I didn't think that anything green ever grew in the desert. The Kuwaitis did a good job at irrigation or something. It was very well vegetated in there. Lots of grazing grass and cattle. But, there's where we were. I don't even know the name of the area, but it was. . .

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L. J. Kimball: Were you married at the time?

Maj. Fagan: No, Sir, I was not.

L. J. Kimball: O.K. It's 100 hours into the war, the war is over, cease fire or whatever. Did you feel a sense of relief or a sense of disappointment?

Maj. Fagan: Disappointment. I wondered why we stopped when we did. I had only assumed that those who knew more than I had already taken care of everybody to my North, because I knew there were some bad guys up there and it wasn't over for us. Our security was still a concern for me, making sure that we had all the force protection means in place. I was just trying to make sure that those guys were taken care of and that we were careful about what we were doing and had our heads screwed on right. Booby traps and that kind of thing, just kind of concerned with mines, Iraqis who were hiding out, snipers, and unexploded ordnance.

L. J. Kimball: It's kind of hard to compare a 100-hour experience to being on Guadalcanal for 6 months. But, during that period you were in combat did you lack for anything? Did you have all the water and chow you needed and felt you were getting properly supported?

Maj. Fagan: Yes Sir. The log [logistics] train was remarkable. Between the fuel for the vehicles we had ammo, concertina, goodness, no I guess we didn't lack of much. We did need one amtrak, because one vehicle busted in one of the lanes that we went through at Umm Gudair. In fact the amtrak in front of me was Sergeant Griffin's, one of my squad leaders. It hit a anti-personnel mine. And damaged his transmission. We had to take those 30 Marines that were on that amtrak. I had all kinds of attachments, Dragons [Medium Antitank Weapons] and machine guns and. . .

L. J. Kimball: 30 people on an amtrak? [LVTs or AAVs were previously called amphibian tractors or "amtraks." This word remains in common usage.]

Maj. Fagan: Probably, I couldn't, no not that many. I had 52 Marines that were in my platoon. That's how many Marines belonged to me, so it would have been a third of that that we had to spread on those other two amtraks that were in the section there with me.

L. J. Kimball: That was hard.

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Maj. Fagan: Oh, yes. I guess we needed some more, another "sled" I guess, or something, another set of wheels. We eventually met up with the same crew and with the same vehicle. They did a good job of fixing it. Those wrench turners, those drivers, they did a magnificent job.

L. J. Kimball: Thank God we didn't really suffer any casualties over there, but did you have any friends or Marines in your platoon that were killed?

Maj. Fagan: No, Sir, none that were killed. One of my Lance Corporals, Lance Corporal Herd who stepped on a bomblet or a submunition, DPICM [Dual Purpose Improved Conventional Munition]. It could have been a booby trap that the enemy put there. He lost a part of his foot. I ran into him several years later when he came back to Parris Island to visit his old barracks when he was a recruit. He saw my mug shot on the wall when I was a commander there, and he came up to see me and we had some time together, so that was a lot of fun. He was the only casualty of war that I experienced. Thank God for that.

L. J. Kimball: At the conclusion of your participation in Desert Storm, did that in any way change your perception of the Marine Corps, or reinforce any ideas you had about war fighting ability of a Marine?

Maj. Fagan: A little bit, Sir. I guess I expected more autonomy as a platoon commander, as an officer. But, say nothing against my chain of command. My Battalion CO was Colonel Bruce A. Gumbar, who is a Chief of Staff here today. He was. . .

L. J. Kimball: He's building a house, 2 up from mine.

Maj. Fagan: He's my hero. Lieutenant Colonel Brooks Brewington, he was in the three shop at the 24th MEU, another two of my favorite people in the Marine Corps. They did a super job of letting me do my job, letting me do what I was paid to do. But I expected to be on my own a little bit more, but it was a battalion commander's war, it was a general's war.

L. J. Kimball: You had a kind of feeling that you were being over supervised.

Maj. Fagan: No, Sir, not really over supervised, just, those kind of decisions weren't left up to me. I had to exercise initiative in other ways. My three squads, my three amtraks, my 52 killers. I just had to be more creative. They didn't micro manage me at all.

L. J. Kimball: How much longer did you stay there after your 100 hours?

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Maj. Fagan: About 2 more months, Sir. I guess we left soon after Easter in 1991.

L. J. Kimball: What did you do during those 2 months?

Maj. Fagan: We maintained some security, maintained presence especially further southwest of Kuwait City in a very, very large pasture. It was, there was grass growing there and some farmers there. We just did not know when exactly we were to redeploy. We were just basically ready to move in case Saddam did something crazy again. My platoon specifically would PT. We trained a lot. Cross training with the Weapons Platoon Marines. We had hygiene inspections, just stayed on top of things. We had to do some motorized patrols. Did a couple of battle studies, actually. Terrain walks with some of the NCO's. And I think we were able to fire some of our unexploded arms. Our BN Gunner, CW02 Tim Hoffman, made a range and we shot off some of the ammo that we had not fired.

L. J. Kimball: Did you experience any morale or hygiene problems during this two month period?

Maj. Fagan: I don't remember any specific one, Sir. Just, I know that was a constant thing on my mind, making sure you know. . . I would walk around to each hole just about every day and just talk to my Marines and see and look and if there was a problem, I'd mention it. Nothing chronic.

L. J. Kimball: Did you experience anything over there, exceptional problems with heat, rashes or anything like that?

Maj. Fagan: Not that I can remember, Sir, I really don't.

L. J. Kimball: So, you get to come back. Did you fly back?

Maj. Fagan: Yes, Sir, we flew back.

L. J. Kimball: And what happened after that in your career?

Maj. Fagan: We had a period of block leave. I took over as the BN Adjutant, we had to reassemble the battalion. 1/8 was slated to go to another deployment with 22nd MEU soon after that, without the six months of workup. We got back in April and had some time for some leave. We changed command, and then we got back on the boat about September I think. So we had a very abbreviated workup schedule for the 22nd MEU. I was the Battalion Adjutant at this point, too. That's when they were filling those billets with 0302s [Infantry Officers], they

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didn't have enough 0180s [Administrative Officers] to go around and it was a real learning experience for me—hard knocks mostly. My learning curve was pretty high the whole time there.

L. J. Kimball: So, in Desert Storm you were in the 6th Marines?

Maj. Fagan: Yes, Sir. 1/8 was attached to the 6th Marines.

L. J. Kimball: O.K. You were still in 1/8, just attached to 6th. So they didn't just shift you from battalion to battalion to fill up a quota.

Maj. Fagan: No, Sir.

L. J. Kimball: Alright. So, you're in 1/8. You're First Lieutenant now?

Maj. Fagan: Yes, Sir, soon promoted, right.

L. J. Kimball: Then where did you go?

Maj. Fagan: We passed through the Med, as the Landing Force, 5th Fleet [LF5F]. Persian Gulf.

L. J. Kimball: What, for the benefit of our listeners, what is LF6F and LF7F?

Maj. Fagan: Landing Force 6th Fleet, Landing Force 5th Fleet. The 6th fleet was in the Med, is in the Med. I would, I remember it being 5th fleet, in the Persian Gulf in the Indian Ocean, Westpac, wherever it was that's who we were attached to, that's who we were a part of in the Persian Gulf. That's where we spent, we were on the ship from September to March, I guess, the next year. Maybe October to March and spent about four months in the Persian Gulf doing some unilateral and bilateral exercises and again on a presence mission in the Persian Gulf.

L. J. Kimball: How long were you deployed?

Maj. Fagan: Six months, Sir.

L. J. Kimball: And then you went back to Camp Lejeune.

Maj. Fagan: Back to Camp Lejeune. Lt. Col. Battaglini changed command again soon after that and then I became the XO of Company A for about another year.

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L. J. Kimball: A1/8?

Maj. Fagan: Yes, Sir, Company A, 1/8.

L. J. Kimball: Who was your company commander?

Maj. Fagan: Started out in Alpha Company the second time in Alpha Company it was Captain Larry Meyer, then Captain King Dixon took over from him.

L. J. Kimball: Where were you, well, let's see you were in the Med, for 6 months and then you came back, you were on the Persian Gulf for 6 months and then came back. Where were the 8th Marines or more specifically your Marines billeted?

Maj. Fagan: We were over where 2nd CEB [Combat Engineer Battalion] is now. Excuse me, Sir, no we came back, and we were down A Street, close to 8th Marines Mess Hall, I forget the building number, but it was H-Style barracks, almost near. . .

L. J. Kimball: A Street. That would be Area One?

Maj. Fagan: Yes Sir. That's where I remember the 8th Marines being the entire time that I've been in the Marine Corps.

L. J. Kimball: O.K. You're back at Camp Lejeune. You must have got married sometime soon?

Maj. Fagan: Yes Sir. I came back from that float with a diamond. I bought it in Haifa, Israel and married my wife in October 1992. My company did a public affairs type of recruiting of deployment on LST [Landing Ship Tank] up on the Great Lakes. December 1992. That was a great experience too. Came back from that, Sir, and we got married. I got special permission, Alpha Increment, Air Alert, to get married. The CO authorized me to go to Atlanta for my wedding even though our "string" was to be ready to deploy anywhere in the world within 4 hours' notification.

L. J. Kimball: And your wife is Karen.

Maj. Fagan: Yes Sir.

L. J. Kimball: Where did you meet her?

Maj. Fagan: I met her in high school in Atlanta, Georgia. Senior year.

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L. J. Kimball: Kept up the relationship?

Maj. Fagan: No, Sir, did not. Didn't really have a relationship except just friendship. Not even that, really. We were across from each other in chemistry and it was the only class we had together. We were also in a couple of clubs together. I went back to a 5-year reunion in 1990, back to Atlanta, and she was not there. She was one of the many people I wanted to see, was curious about, so I asked about her and they told me she was still in the area. Got her address and wrote her a letter and finally she wrote me back. It was at that point I was in Desert Storm. I was over in South West Asia when I got her letter and wrote her back and maybe exchanged 3 or 4 letters and came back from Desert Storm and I went to see her a couple of weeks later. Along with some other girls.

L. J. Kimball: How did you carry on a relationship with her down in Georgia?

Maj. Fagan: I drove eight hours. Eight hours through Florence, Colombia, Augusta.

L. J. Kimball: It must have been pretty serious.

Maj. Fagan: Yes, Sir, it was. I, we, we were both a little older than most. No, we weren't older, we were 24, 23, I guess.

L. J. Kimball: That's about the average age these days.

Maj. Fagan: Yes, Sir. We were at the right point in our lives to let this happen and no holding back. We just let it blossom.

L. J. Kimball: Where did you get married?

Maj. Fagan: In her church in Dunwoody, Georgia.

L. J. Kimball: Then you brought her back up to Camp Lejeune?

Maj. Fagan: Yes, Sir. We got married in October 1992 and she moved here of course with me. We were living out in Topsail, the same place I had lived when I was a brand new 2nd Lieutenant coming from the Basic School and of course I kicked Todd out. He didn't live there anymore.

L. J. Kimball: Your roommate?

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Maj. Fagan: Yes Sir. Let's see, I guess we stayed here until February 1993. Then we checked out and went to Parris Island after that.

L. J. Kimball: What did you do at Parris Island?

Maj. Fagan: Series Commander in 1st Battalion. I was on the battalion staff for a little while, took over Bravo Company for a couple of cycles and then went to the Depot Headquarters worked in G3 and then to AWS.

L. J. Kimball: Did you live in government quarters there?

Maj. Fagan: Yes, Sir. For a little while we lived out in town. Rented a place, a town house in Beaufort and we went to Laurel Bay, South Carolina. Real nice place. We lived like kings.

L. J. Kimball: Had her family had any military experience? Had she had any experience with the military before then?

Maj. Fagan: No, Sir, none.

L. J. Kimball: What was her impression after living aboard post and being married to a Marine for a few years?

Maj. Fagan: Well, after 3 years Sir, she was getting the hang of it. She's pretty quick to learn about how things go, and she was real inquisitive.

L. J. Kimball: Looking at her as a young Marine officer's wife, what impressions did she have about the officer enlisted relationship and the facilities aboard the base for dependents. Did she just take all that in or?

Maj. Fagan: I think you'll probably have to ask her that question. I could speak for her if you want to. I guess I would say that she was taking it all in, forming her own opinion of it, finally figuring out that, hey, Fred's on duty all the time, you know? Even if I don't like it if he corrects Marines or gets upset at something that I think is just silly, that's his job and she respected that.

L. J. Kimball: So, she got on board after awhile with the whole thing.

Maj. Fagan: She got on board immediately. She was supportive even before we were married. She was very curious, very enthusiastic about me doing well. Supporting me.

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L. J. Kimball: O.K. You leave Parris Island, then where?

Maj. Fagan: To AWS, Quantico.

L. J. Kimball: And you were there?

Maj. Fagan: A year.

L. J. Kimball: What year was that?

Maj. Fagan: Sir?

L. J. Kimball: What year?

Maj. Fagan: School year 1996, 1997.

L. J. Kimball: Was AWS just 5 days a week?

Maj. Fagan: Yes, Sir it was and we would occasionally have a weekend assignment, a battle study, a TEWT or something. Reading was continuous. But, pretty much 5 days a week.

L. J. Kimball: For the benefit of our listeners, TEWT?

Maj. Fagan: Oh, TEWT. Tactical Exercise without Troops. Terrain walk. Playing war without your boys.

L. J. Kimball: Did you live aboard base?

Maj. Fagan: Yes, Sir, on the 300 block. We loved it, it was great. We called it "the projects."

L. J. Kimball: It's a beautiful place, I loved it there. You finished AWS, then where?

Maj. Fagan: Came back to Camp "Swampy," lived, checked into 3rd Battalion 8th Marines.

L. J. Kimball: This was 1997?

Maj. Fagan: Yes, Sir, the summer of 1997. I check in just after a couple of weeks leave. Got Karen settled in a house, that we had already rented a couple of weeks before out on Topsail and we left. I think I checked in on the 25th of May, 1997 and we left

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on the first of June for Okinawa on the UDP. So it was pretty quick. I was the 3 Alpha [Assistant Operations Officer].

L. J. Kimball: Somewhere along the line you got promoted Captain?

Maj. Fagan: Yes, Sir, at Parris Island. After about a year at Parris Island.

L. J. Kimball: And UDP, 6 months?

Maj. Fagan: Yes, Sir, we were at Camp Schwab, June to December of 1997. I took over Kilo Company while I was out there. I think I said I checked in as 3A. Great experience. I had always snubbed my nose at UDP, but no more. Great ranges and training areas out there. You must have a good plan though, for your Marines in order to succeed. I would do that again in a heartbeat. Maybe one day I will, if I ever get a chance.

L. J. Kimball: I'm sure you will. What were the relations with Japanese there, anything conspicuous or different than you expected? Were they fairly amiable, or was there friction between you and the population?

Maj. Fagan: This was after, in 1997. Of course this was closer to the rape of the Japanese school girl and we had our antennas up about that. The chain of command was cautious and prepared our Marines for correct liberty behavior before we went over there. But, my experience was, Sir, that they were friendly to us and they liked the dollars that we spent over there. The yen we spent. I didn't know that they were complaining about moving Futenma until I got back here and read in the [Marine Corps] Gazette. That's an understatement. I didn't know they wanted to put the floating base out there in Orawon Bay off shore, heliport, whatever, but the Japanese were very supportive of us from what I could see. I didn't experience any bad blood there at all.

L. J. Kimball: Are we still at Futenma?

Maj. Fagan: Yes, Sir.

L. J. Kimball: No immediate plans you're aware of to move out of there?

Maj. Fagan: Yes, Sir, I think we will move out of there one day. I'd say the next five years we'll have somewhere else to fly helicopters.

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L. J. Kimball: When I was in the Division Operations Officer in the 3rd Division, we were running around looking at Saipan, Tinian, and other places like the Philippines, just in case they pulled the plug in Okinawa and we had to find some place else to train out there. O.K. refresh my memory. Karen was in Topsail while you were on this UDP. O.K. Then you got back from UDP.

Maj. Fagan: Yes, Sir. We moved in this house soon after that. After I returned. I was CO of K Company in 3/8 and we moved here, I think in March 1998.

L. J. Kimball: O.K. And your current function is what? **Tape stopped a bit.** How decisions were made and how senior officers talked to one another and deal with one another, that sort of thing?

Maj. Fagan: Yes, Sir.

L. J. Kimball: Well, we'll get back to that, just as long as we're in this chronology, when did you, when were you relieved as ADC [Aide-de-Camp]?

Maj. Fagan: General West left on 29 June, so by that point his replacement was here, Brigadier General Flannagan. I spent a couple of days being his aide, helping him get settled in his new assignment and snap in his new aide and so I was out of there on 8 July, a year after I checked in.

L. J. Kimball: Do you have any idea what your next post is going to be?

Maj. Fagan: Yes, Sir, I'm going to be the future operations officer for 24th MEU. I'll be in the 3 Shop.

L. J. Kimball: Is that a permanent staff?

Maj. Fagan: Actually it's not. I will be on what they call a troop list, a kind of cadre—kind of an augmentation on E minus 180, the start of the MEU composites. They get a det [detachment] from Anglico [Air Naval Gunfire Liaison Company]. I'll be the OIC [Officer-In-Charge] of the det coming from Anglico, but I'll also be the guy who plans the operations and exercises for the MEU.

L. J. Kimball: When were you promoted to major?

Maj. Fagan: 1 May, 1999, not too long ago, this year.

L. J. Kimball: So, you still have the quartermaster on your gold leaves.

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Maj. Fagan: That's right.

L. J. Kimball: What in particular did you learn from the experience of being an aide to a general officer?

Maj. Fagan: Oh, more than you got time to put on one tape there, I'll tell you.

L. J. Kimball: Just give me some ideas.

Maj. Fagan: O.K. Want some ideas? First of all Sir, I don't think I'll ever have this problem that I need to worry about, but I don't think I want to be a general. Those guys are amazing patriots and Marine Officers who are serving their country in a capacity that few get to do, but they are so busy and they cannot say "no" many times to things that I know they don't want to do. This is because they're so committed and loyal to the organization and their country and their Commandant and their Marines. That drives them to be so busy, and they're basically workaholics. As a rule, most generals are work-a-holics. Fortunately right now we don't have any kids, so I've been able to do more in the Marine Corps and with only Karen up until now, that's one thing I learned. There's many others, Sir.

L. J. Kimball: You talked about commitments that the generals had, were all of these within the Marine Corps, or a lot of civic relations that they were involved in.

Maj. Fagan: Yes, Sir, there were all kinds of commitments that they had and they were all because either the general chose to do it, or he was told to do it, or because someone needed him. I've seen generals who couldn't say no to someone who really needed his help or needed him to do something for them. That's the kind of guy General West is.

L. J. Kimball: These generals, being very much committed. That kind of translates into you being very committed too, didn't it?

Maj. Fagan: Yes, Sir.

L. J. Kimball: Everywhere the general went you went too?

Maj. Fagan: Yes, Sir, as a rule that's what happened. That brought about a lot of fun things to do. I mean we traveled together to Lithuania, and Germany.

L. J. Kimball: Was Karen able to go with you?

Maj. Fagan: No, Sir, she was not. She went to Washington, D.C., with me. I went up there with the general many times, about once a month, it seemed like. I sat on a promotion board as the junior recorder when he was the president. This was an experience I will never have to do again, probably. We went to Ecuador twice, Argentina, Peru.

L. J. Kimball: That is where you got this shirt?

Maj. Fagan: That's where I got this shirt. Fort Sill, Oklahoma; Jacksonville, FL; Richmond, VA; Norfolk, all kinds of places with him. Lots of different ways to get there, by tactical helicopter, a C-12, Sedan, C-130. It was great.

L. J. Kimball: I'm sure you gained experiences and the kind of insights into how the Marine Corps functions that somebody that has never been an aide would experience. It didn't surprise you how decisions were made and how General Officers operated and how orders were passed down the line?

Maj. Fagan: One thing that did surprise me Sir was the role of the Iron Major on the MEF staff. There are some quality officers in the MEF staff who would basically make the decisions. They were just endorsed up the chain of command and tweaked a little bit. So, there wasn't much, the decision was already made. It was endorsed at each level. There were plenty of superior colonels and gunnies and master sergeants and master guns [master gunnery sergeants]. My memory will be that the majors on the II MEF staff that I saw were stalwarts of planning, and they were as committed as those generals in bringing things like the MEF plan for what's going to happen in Kosovo if we have to go to war.

L. J. Kimball: So, it was probably a pleasant surprise for you to find that the field grade officers had more decision-making power, more authority than you suspected.

Maj. Fagan: Yes, Sir. Well, the majors and lieutenant colonels that I served with up to that point were no less qualified or competent. They were excellent in their own right.

L. J. Kimball: The only officer that I still know at II MEF was a Lieutenant Colonel Steve Sayko and I don't if that name is familiar to you.

Maj. Fagan: Yes, Sir. He was the acting G2 for quite a while, but his new boss has checked in now.

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L. J. Kimball: Talk about interesting experiences. I don't know if you're familiar, he joined the Marine Corps as an enlisted man, went through the ranks, was in Vietnam as an enlisted Marine the same time I was there. So, he's had quite a career also.

Maj. Fagan: Yes, Sir.

L. J. Kimball: Well, looking back over your experiences, what is your impression as a Marine Officer, particularly your Camp Lejeune experience of the average Marine enlisted man, and has this changed at all since you were a junior officer?

Maj. Fagan: Just to repeat the question Sir. You want to know my perspective to, my view of the perspective of the average Marine officer?

L. J. Kimball: Particularly based on your experience at Camp Lejeune. Obviously that involves deployments from Camp Lejeune also. Compared to your vision when you were a young second lieutenant, what a Marine officer was like and what an enlisted Marine was like, and you've had several experiences over the years, where you've seen different cases and looked at them with the perception of platoon commander, company commander, that sort of thing. Any changes?

Maj. Fagan: Well, I never expected that I'd be a major. I remember that as a second john, majors were the old guy. They were really experienced, but I don't consider myself having as much experience as I remember they did. I always thought of those guys as much more knowledgeable than I was. Today we are promoting guys a little earlier. Lieutenants are becoming captains sooner. Captains are becoming majors sooner. I think the enlisted side is promoting Marines sooner. In some MOS's [Military Occupational Specialty] you can become a sergeant before your first enlistment is up. Unheard of when I was a lieutenant. We're doing more now than we used to. Operationally Sir, we are on a short string. It just seems like things are a little more complex now-a-days and I'm sure that in being a field grade officer now, things are going to be more complex than when I was a lieutenant. That was the easiest job I ever had, being a platoon commander. Things have become steadily more difficult and challenging, and that is a good thing. I'm enjoying that about the Marine Corps, but, are those thoughts, want to ask me more questions to help me answer that question better, or?

L. J. Kimball: You've given me some pretty good ideas. Now, we're talking about your personal perspective. When you're writing a personalized general history of Camp Lejeune, you want to know what the individual feels. This isn't scholarly monograph, this is a popular history. Something that, somebody such as yourself or even a junior Marine would pick up and see on a personal level what people's

perceptions of things were and what their experiences were here at Camp Lejeune. Do you kind of get the perception, either based on your experience or just from recent activities that the Marine Corps, maybe II MEF, are understaffed or overworked?

Maj. Fagan: Yes, Sir, I do. I saw that everyday up at the MEF. I saw it also in 3/8. We just needed more Marines. In fact, that's something that I learned from General West, that the one single thing that we need to go for in the Corps is 5,000 young killers in the Marine Corps, we needed them badly because the downward spiral after a deployment is so degrading on readiness that it's not even worth talking about here, because it's such a, it's another issue than what I think what you're interested in Sir. It's a real concern that I have.

L. J. Kimball: Do your rifle companies have 5 officers in them?

Maj. Fagan: No, Sir, not all of them. The ones going to the MEU do and the ones getting ready for deployment like UDP do but in my experience, there's been plenty. . . there was a time Sir, after we returned from Okinawa in December of 1997 and January, February and March. . . those were lean times. I mean we did what we could with what we had. I think we did a great job, but I remember one of my platoon commanders for quite a while was a sergeant. Did a fine job. I just tried to put 150 pounds in his 100 pound sack.

L. J. Kimball: Did you say your platoon leader?

Maj. Fagan: Yes, Sir.

L. J. Kimball: Should be a squad leader. Were your squad leaders, for the most part, were they T/O [Table of Organization], or did you find some corporals, or lance corporals in there?

Maj. Fagan: No, Sir, there was never, very rarely was there a platoon, with four sergeants. In fact in Okinawa we eliminated the billet of guide because we didn't think we needed them. At least I didn't think we needed them, my 1st Sgt. and I. You do need them, but that's when you have 42 studs that you're worried about, but the sergeant needed to be as a squad leader and that's where I wanted him. You not only learned from his leadership experience but also be a leader and teach his team leaders, his lance corporal how to be an NCO.

L. J. Kimball: The current T/O. It's 3 rifle companies and a headquarters and service company per battalion?

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Maj. Fagan: And a weapons company.

L. J. Kimball: And a weapons company.

Maj. Fagan: Yes, Sir, they call it headquarters and service, but company.

L. J. Kimball: When I was, I don't consider myself an Old Salt, but when I was a company commander, we had 4 rifle companies, a weapons company, and a headquarters and service company in a rifle battalion. But, do you still have your 3 squads and other than that the T/O hasn't significantly changed?

Maj. Fagan: I think we changed from a 4-letter infantry battalion to 3 when I was a lieutenant. 1/8 had Alpha through Delta when I was getting ready for the float, two helo companies, I think a boat company, and a mech company. The 2nd Helo company became well it was basically disbanded and it was spread throughout the rest of the battalion.

L. J. Kimball: How about the quality of the enlisted Marine? You saw them as platoon and company commander and even from a general's aide's perspective, heard some of the general officers talking about this undoubtedly, what's your perception?

Maj. Fagan: Well, I'm sure it's kind of grown to what the, how the enlisted Marines have changed slightly over the last ten years that I've seen. I think in my experiences as a company commander, NCO's have more authority, they can handle more authority, they can be more responsible than I remember NCO's being able to be. My sergeants, when I was a plt. commander, were outstanding in every sense of the word. They had more experience than my squad leaders who I had as a company commander in 3/8. When I was a lieutenant NCO's were much more experienced than today. Your young Marine coming out of boot camp today is a lot smarter than when he was ten years ago in my opinion.

L. J. Kimball: O.K. I want to make sure. Your perception is that the sergeants were not as savvy later on as they were early on, that as a captain you didn't feel that they were as qualified as when you were lieutenant?

Maj. Fagan: No Sir, not as qualified. They were more experienced, sergeants were more experienced when I was, NCO's were more experienced when I was a lieutenant.

L. J. Kimball: More time in grade.

Maj. Fagan: Yes, Sir, more time in grade. Two of them had been to recruiting duty. But, when I was a lieutenant and all of them were on their second enlistment. As a company commander, most of them were on their first enlistment. Some of my lance corporals had been to barracks duty when I was a lieutenant, so there was a lot more time and grade and time in service required to be promoted back then. Today as a culture we are given more responsibility, today as a Corps we are giving more responsibility to our NCO's and I think they're exceeding our expectations of them. The young Marines coming out of boot camp are smarter today than they were when I was a lieutenant

L. J. Kimball: Once again, the captains, when you first entered the Corps, you say they were harder. Is it physically, mentally also?

Maj. Fagan: That's right. Yes, Sir. Have to clean your weapon, have to get mail in the field. I mean all of those things were part of, I tried to do as company commander. We did it a couple times. We were able to stay out in the field for an extended time. Making the battalion staff work for us in an expeditionary mode. Come in on a Saturday and get our mail for us or get us hot chow, or work something out with the ASP, with the Ammo Supply Point.

L. J. Kimball: You were referring to ankle biters, you're talking about little jobs as opposed to dependent children?

Maj. Fagan: Yes, Sir. Ankle biters, a CAPEX here, some tests that the division or regimental staff wants us to do. A platoon that's needed for role players for a MEU SOCEX [Special Operations Capable Exercise] or something like that. We're all losing Marines left and right. I'm getting dwindled down.

L. J. Kimball: Do you think we have a retention problem in the Marine Corps?

Maj. Fagan: Yes, Sir I think we have an officer retention problem. Sure do. It just seems like a lot of my buddies are getting out, Sir. Buddies who are good, are getting out.

L. J. Kimball: Do you have a feeling of why they're getting out instead of staying in?

Maj. Fagan: Yes, Sir. I think they are getting out because things are just too busy. But, they're just being gone too much from their families, they're kids are growing up without them. Money is not the issue, I don't think.

L. J. Kimball: Would it be fair to say that the Marine Corps just isn't as much fun anymore? In a general sense?

Maj. Fagan: No, Sir, I don't think it's fair to say that. Because some guys, I mean it's just all happens at time in your life. A buddy of mine here had two little girls, and Karen and I don't have any kids. So, there's a different cycle going there. If I had two little ones running around here, I might be wearing a different hat. So, I think it all depends on what your individual perspective is and where you are in your life and what your family situation is. That's not the only reason people are getting out, though.

L. J. Kimball: An interesting point that frequently comes up when you've got the old timers that were here during the squad bay era and see Marines living in fancified motels. That we've lost something in the way of small unit integrity and unity as a result of so many more Marines being married. There's much less contact to develop that small unit cohesion that they used to have. Do you see anything of that? Do you have a feeling that we've lost a lot of unity we've had in years past?

Maj. Fagan: It's hard for me to compare, because all of my ten years in the Marine Corps, we've always had a dormitory-style barracks. My only other experience is my platoon in OCS and we were, in what my staff NCO's have told me, through my career, but I can tell you that the dividends would probably be very high if we did go back to something like a squad bay, Spartan type existence. I think we'd have a recruiting problem and a retention problem then. Remember the NCO area, I can just imagine in my own mind, roped off, they got curtains and sheets hung up, and wall lockers make a false wall and platoons go out together on liberty. If somebody gets a dear John letter everyone knows about it, his NCO is helping out you know. Not that these things don't happen today, it's harder to have that father/son, teacher/scholar relationship, when some young man is holing up in his BEQ room.

L. J. Kimball: I've heard a lot of people and general officers standing up and talking about how the Marine today was so much better than they were in years past. I don't know what to think about that because a general a lot of time, in spite of what they think, have to be politically correct and toe the party line, whether they actually believe that or not. I didn't, wasn't really sure whether that was actually what they felt, that Marines today were so much better than they were in years past, when you see what the Marines in years past accomplished, it's difficult to envision. Somebody coming out of the current culture, and the military is just a cross section of our culture, being that hard, being able to survive the sort of things the Marines on Guadalcanal, or Iwo Jima, Pelelieu or the Korean War, endured. . .

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Maj. Fagan: Hopefully I made that clear a couple of minutes ago. You know, I can't say that Marines today are better in every category, they aren't, because we've lost, I think we've lost a little bit of our warrior spirit, our fighting spirit, our culture in the Marine Corps in my 10 years as being a Marine, Sir, and that's just my observation. That's my opinion. I've got my reasons why I think that way. So, I, I don't think Marines today in general are in all cases better than they were a decade ago. I don't think anybody that I remember ever said that, actually.

L. J. Kimball: The safe thing to say is that they're smarter then they used to be. Is that fair?

Maj. Fagan: In most cases, yes, but of course you know what happens with smarts, common sense, goes down.

L. J. Kimball: Yes, sometimes a little good sense outweighs a lot of smarts

Maj. Fagan: Yes, Sir.

L. J. Kimball: Do you have any memorabilia, even though we're not talking about something 50 years ago, that shows young Midshipman Fagan, or 2nd Lieutenant Fagan. You know photographs, that sort of thing?

Maj. Fagan: Yes, Sir. I've got some back there.

L. J. Kimball: The motivation for this question is, once again, this being a popular history, what Marines can identify with when they're looking at a book. Here's Private John Smith, for example, he's from Ithaca, NY. Oh, how about that? I'm from Ithaca, NY, and look here he was when he was a private in WWII and here he was when he retired as a general. Isn't that neat, and make the contrast and comparison. Or you know, here's Corporal Johnson holding a pungie stick that he brought back from I Corps. It's this sort of thing, the reason I'm asking you. If . . . **(tape stopped)** When they're making this a popular, general history of Camp Lejeune, the personal experiences personalize this for people reading it. Rather than have a scholarly monograph that would put anything except the scholar asleep, you've got a Marine brings his family to Camp Lejeune, a young Marine here for his first tour of duty picks up something he can read and identify with and a young officer finds out, gee this is what they were doing ten years ago at Camp Lejeune. This is people's impression, how they changed. Once again the photographs, before, now, after, memorabilia that they picked up. Look I brought back a T-54 from Iraq, or something, parked in the backyard and here's a picture of me sitting on it. This is what I'm looking for because, if you have something of interest and then if

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they decide to use your material here, someone will want to come and take a picture of it to put it in the book. Take a picture of your T-54 in your backyard.

Maj. Fagan: Yes. Do you want me to find some stuff Sir?

L. J. Kimball: No, you can just tell me.

Maj. Fagan: I do have some things. Are you looking for anything, do you want me to tell you anything specific of what I do have?

L. J. Kimball: Did you bring back anything legal from Desert Storm?

Maj. Fagan: Yes, Sir, I brought back some pretty neat stuff. A helmet, an Iraqi helmet. Some duce [782] gear, canteen, and a war belt and that kind of thing. An Iraqi sea bag, actually I brought back a copy of, I'm not sure who it is, but the picture, what looks like a Saint, or maybe Jesus, you know, someone's perspective someone's picture of Jesus. I found in Kuwait. An old Russian level for heavy mortar, some kind of. . .

L. J. Kimball: A sight assembly?

Maj. Fagan: Not the sight assembly, no Sir, it's some kind of compass. A night sight for probably an aiming stake for a mortar.

L. J. Kimball: Those are the sort of things that are interesting. You know when everybody came back from Desert Storm, they and their dog had a pack full of souvenirs. Most of the people that had been there, say, so what, but 30 years after that, somebody reading, would say this is really interesting. It's just like all of the Marines and soldiers and airmen that came back from WWII with a lot of stuff at the time that people had been looking at for 4 or 5 years and could care less. But 50 years removed, here's a Japanese type 97 rifle, or a German helmet, it's all of interest now. It's become meaningful to some old timer, that retired Sergeant Major, that veteran. You show the knee mortar he captured on Saipan. That's really meaningful. People young and old enjoy reading about that. So, that's why I'm asking what you might have. Then somebody can come and take a picture of it. I'm certainly not a competent enough photographer to take something that's going to appear in a flossy, glossy history of the Marine Corps. But, if they know people have it, they'll probably make a point sometime. . .

Maj. Fagan: I've got picture too of me in college, throughout my life.

L. J. Kimball: You and your father, here's 2 generations of Marines, standing in the backyard at Quantico or something like that. That's the sort of thing that we're looking for, would be of interest. Do you, to sum up here, do you have any general observations that you haven't already covered? Anything that you'd like to comment about? Your perceptions or experiences in the Marine Corps?

Maj. Fagan: There's a lot of people asking me if I'm going to stick around a little bit. Am I going to stay in or get out or what am I going to do and of course that crosses my mind always. It constantly does. Of course it really started crossing my mind after I got married and after we got to Parris Island. It would be a great thing, a great thing you always get to work with young people. You're always being challenged. At least I am. As long as I'm putting food on the table and work with young people and being challenged, I'll stick around. As long as I'm having fun. When it stops being fun, I'll have to see where I need to go next. I also know that I've learned that everybody at one point, yourself included, my Dad, General West one day, is going to be kicked to the curb. You know, our usefulness to the Corps. We're a big machine and it's going to spit me out one day and kick me to the curb. The short term goal is to make sure that it's on my terms when I want it to be. I always thought that Camp Lejeune was a great place to raise a family. It would be a neat place. But, it's a tough place to raise a family because the Marine in the family is gone so much and you really got to have a special support network. You know, the wife who stays home has got to be behind you. So, it's certainly there are some MOS's that appear to deploy more than others. That doesn't mean they're any less busy. You also learn too, I used to think that everybody was less busy than I was, and of course that doesn't hold water at all. Everybody is generally busy.

L. J. Kimball: They stay pretty busy. What are you thinking about if you decided, the Marine Corps is great but you'd like to become a family man, devote more time to your family. What would you like to do if you left the Marine Corps?

Maj. Fagan: I don't know. I just don't know.

L. J. Kimball: That's always an inhibition to getting out.

Maj. Fagan: That's right. We just came back off leave from Atlanta and some other areas. But, saw some high rise buildings and it did not interest me at all, working in a sky scraper in perimeter somewhere, in downtown Atlanta, Buckhead. I thought of the people who go to work everyday and what kind of loyalty they have to Hewlett Packard or IBM or whatever. Whatever company. I just don't see it as being as fun as what I do. It's fun. You know, they may be busy, I'm sure they

are busy. They make our economy go round. I don't know what I'd do, Sir. Certainly I guess I can also say that just because I'm a Marine, doesn't mean I can't be a good family man too, a good Dad. There's been lots of good examples around here of good fathers. But, it boils down to the perspective and where your priorities lie and how you act on those priorities and some of those things. Actions speak louder than words do, so, hopefully I'll have that lined up right when and if God gives us kids.

L. J. Kimball: Well, to echo some of the things that you said. I think it's human nature that people like to identify themselves with something larger than themselves, an organization and we have the Marine Corps for example to identify with. Being a member of that great organization. I know I always said it didn't matter, where is Karen by the way?

Maj. Fagan: She's back in the back getting ready for, she's doing her Master's Degree, doing her thesis in Math down at UNCW [University of North Carolina at Wilmington].

L. J. Kimball: What is her discipline?

Maj. Fagan: Math.

L. J. Kimball: Wow, that's good.

Maj. Fagan: It's pure Math, actually.

L. J. Kimball: I just wondered if she was here, to modify my language accordingly. You know the world can be going to hell in a hand basket, but you look in that mirror every morning when you shave and you say, By God, I'm a Marine. That's something. I am somebody. I'm a member of the finest, fighting organization in the world. I don't care what people can do to me, I still won't forget or lose that pride in being a Marine. That's worth living for.

Maj. Fagan: It definitely adds a lot to what I do each day. I look forward to leave, this has been great, but I'm looking forward to my next assignment and what the future may hold, so it's exciting.

L. J. Kimball: I still feel like I'm a Marine. I had enough time to prepare myself for being a lieutenant colonel. I think I was 36 years old when I made lieutenant colonel. 30 years old when I made major. Of course the promotion rates are different. Different times. I was a lieutenant colonel for 11 years and after the initial shock of not being picked up for colonel, I got used to it. I felt very comfortable at the

end. I've had some very challenging, interesting, jobs while I was in the Marine Corps. When it came time to hang up my jersey, I didn't really have any regrets, it was just. . . it wasn't like I was no longer a Marine, it was just, I was becoming a different sort of Marine. I was just in transition, because I spend at least 3 days during the week over at Camp Lejeune. There's all sorts of things you can do over there and not be a Marine. I'm very much involved with various Marine projects, for example. Like Douglas MacArthur said, when he'd be in his death bed, his last thoughts would be of the Corps. Of course he was talking about the Corps of Cadets. You can say that same thing for a lot of Marines. It'll probably be the Corps, the Corps, the Corps. That's the Marine Corps they're talking about. Well, Fred I really appreciate you giving me this time.

Maj. Fagan: Your welcome, Sir. If there's something that you. . . I don't really know how your book is going to go, how this history is going to go, so please feel free to contact me again if there's something that you want a specific answer to, or, did you want me to write something out too? I could probably do something like that too.

L. J. Kimball: Let me ask you one quick question here just to see if you might have the right answer. I think I explained to you that we're looking for perspective, young, old, black, white, male, female, do you happen to know any young Marines, 1st tour, 1st enlistment here at Camp Lejeune, that you think would want to talk to me about their perspective of the Marine Corps here in 1999?

Maj. Fagan: My company, my old company is in Spain right now. I have plenty there, but they're gone. I'd have to ask around if you want me to.

L. J. Kimball: That's no problem. I've got some other people doing that. I have to ask just to see if you might, if somebody might come in mind right off the top of your head.

Maj. Fagan: I'll give it some thought, Sir and I'll get it back to you. You probably give them the courtesy. . . I do have some people in mind. Let me ask them first and if that's O.K., can I give them your home number? Is that O.K.?

L. J. Kimball: Yes. Of course the important one, one of the first criteria is, do they want to? I'm not going to drag anyone in, because it's pointless. It has to be an open relationship when you're conducting an interview. If somebody comes in and crosses their arms and their legs and says, I'm not going to, no, yes, no, yes, am I done now Sir. We're wasting both our time. If he really likes the project, feels like he wants to talk about his experiences in the Marine Corps, then that's the person I want to talk to.

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Maj. Fagan: Alright.

L. J. Kimball: It's strictly voluntary.

Maj. Fagan: O.K. I'll give them your number and you know where to reach me, so I'll check in on Monday. That's E Day minus 180, so.

L. J. Kimball: Yes. I know what it's like. Like a lot of things. You're a platoon commander and you can't imagine being 2nd lieutenant, how you're ever going to be smart enough to be a company commander. But, by the time you become a company commander you're ready to do it. You're ready to be the best company commander in the Marine Corps, and it's like being an S3. Oh, my God, how can I possibly be an S3? But, by the time you're a major, having been a company commander, a platoon commander, having seen what a battalion staff does, and you say, I can do this.

Maj. Fagan: Yes, Sir. That's my thoughts exactly. I think as I was telling you before. I never thought I'd be a major before. All the majors I had were more experienced than what I think I am now, but really probably not.

L. J. Kimball: The other part of that whether it's good or bad is, when you take over a job like that, you say, I know I can do this, but I'm going to be awfully busy too.

END OF TAPE